

What is Claimed is:

1. A method of selecting a program for download from a host system to a target system, said method comprising:
 - storing a plurality of programs at the host system;
 - storing a plurality of identifiers at the host system, with each of at least some of said identifiers being associated with at least one of said programs;
 - connecting the host system and the target system by a communication channel;
 - sending an identifier from the target system to the host system over the communication channel;
 - receiving said identifier as a received identifier at the host system; and
 - employing said identifiers and said received identifier to select one of said at least one of said programs for download from the host system to the target system.
2. The method of Claim 1 further comprising
 - employing as said programs a plurality of application programs;
 - including an application loader at the host system;
 - requesting said identifier from the target system by said application loader over the communication channel;
 - receiving said identifier as said received identifier at said application loader;
 - determining that said received identifier matches one of said identifiers and responsively selecting one of said application programs; and
 - downloading said selected one of said application programs over the communication channel from said application loader to the target system.
3. The method of Claim 1 further comprising
 - employing with said identifier a vendor identifier;
 - sending said vendor identifier from the target system to the host system over the communication channel;
 - receiving said vendor identifier at the host system;

determining that said received vendor identifier matches one of said identifiers and responsively selecting one of said programs; and

downloading said selected one of said programs over the communication channel from the host system to the target system.

4. The method of Claim 3 further comprising

storing a hardware identifier for the target system with said vendor identifier at the target system;

requesting said hardware identifier and said vendor identifier from the target system by the host system over the communication channel;

receiving said hardware identifier and said vendor identifier as said received identifier at the host system;

employing a plurality of vendor identifiers and associating one of said vendor identifiers and at least one hardware identifier with each of said programs at the host system;

determining that said received vendor identifier matches one of the vendor identifiers; and

determining that said received hardware identifier matches said at least one hardware identifier associated with said one of the vendor identifiers and responsively downloading said selected one of said programs over the communication channel from the host system to the target system.

5. The method of Claim 3 further comprising

storing a hardware identifier for the target system with said vendor identifier at the target system;

storing a program associated with said hardware identifier at the host system;

requesting said hardware identifier and said vendor identifier from the target system by the host system over the communication channel;

receiving said hardware identifier and said vendor identifier as said received identifier at the host system;

associating a vendor identifier and at least one hardware identifier with each of said programs at the host system;

determining that said received vendor identifier has a predetermined value; and

downloading said program associated with said hardware identifier over the communication channel from the host system to the target system.

6. The method of Claim 1 further comprising
storing said identifiers in a file at the host system;
associating a vendor with the target system;
employing with said identifier a vendor identifier, which identifies said vendor;
employing a hardware identifier associated with the target system;
storing a program associated with said hardware identifier at the host system;
sending said vendor identifier and said hardware identifier from the target system to the host system over the communication channel;
receiving said vendor identifier and said hardware identifier as said received identifier at the host system; and
failing to find said file at the host system and responsively downloading said program associated with said hardware identifier over the communication channel from the host system to the target system.

7. The method of Claim 1 further comprising
associating a vendor with the target system;
employing with said identifier a vendor identifier, which identifies said vendor;
employing a hardware identifier associated with the target system;
storing a program associated with said hardware identifier at the host system;
sending said vendor identifier and said hardware identifier from the target system to the host system over the communication channel;
receiving said vendor identifier and said hardware identifier as said received identifier at the host system; and

failing to find said received vendor identifier at the host system and responsively downloading said program associated with said hardware identifier over the communication channel from the host system to the target system.

8. The method of Claim 1 further comprising
downloading said selected one of said at least one of said programs over the communication channel from the host system to the target system;
and

loading and executing said downloaded and selected one of said at least one of said programs at the target system.

9. The method of Claim 1 further comprising
associating a version number with each of said programs;
employing with said identifier a vendor identifier;
storing said identifiers in a file at the host system;
associating one of said identifiers in said file at the host system with one of said programs having said version number for said one of said programs;
updating said file to associate said one of said identifiers with a new program, which is different than said programs, and which has a new version number, which is different than said version number; and
storing said new program at the host system.

10. The method of Claim 1 further comprising
determining that one of said identifiers matches said received identifier; and
determining that none of said programs corresponds to said one of said identifiers and responsively displaying an error message at the host system.

11. A system for selecting a program for download, said system comprising:

a host system including a memory storing a plurality of programs, said memory also storing a plurality of identifiers, with each of at least some of said identifiers being associated with at least one of said programs;

a target system including an identifier;

a communications channel connecting said host system and said target system; and

a loader routine adapted to execute at said host system, communicate with said target system through the communications channel, request said identifier as a received identifier from said target system over the communication channel, and employ said identifiers and said received identifier to select one of said at least one of said programs for download from said host system to said target system.

12. The system of Claim 11 wherein said programs are a plurality of application programs; and wherein said loader routine is an application loader routine adapted to request said identifier from said target system over the communication channel, receive said identifier as said received identifier, determine that said received identifier matches one of said identifiers and responsively select one of said application programs, and download said selected one of said application programs over the communication channel to said target system.

13. The system of Claim 11 wherein said identifier includes a vendor identifier; wherein said target system is adapted to send said vendor identifier to said host system over the communication channel; and wherein said loader routine is further adapted to receive said vendor identifier, determine that said received vendor identifier matches one of said identifiers and responsively select one of said programs, and download said selected one of said programs over the communication channel from said host system to said target system.

14. The system of Claim 13 wherein said identifier further includes a hardware identifier for said target system; wherein said loader routine is further adapted to employ a plurality of vendor identifiers, request said hardware identifier and said vendor identifier from said target system over the communication channel, receive said hardware identifier and said vendor identifier as said received identifier, associate a vendor identifier and at least one hardware identifier with each of said programs, determine that said received vendor identifier matches one of the vendor identifiers, and determine that said received hardware identifier matches said at least one hardware identifier associated with said one of the vendor identifiers and responsively download said selected one of said programs over the communication channel to said target system.

15. The system of Claim 11 wherein the identifier of said target system includes a vendor identifier associated with a wireless communication vendor; and wherein said target system includes a first wired communication port adapted to communicate with said communication channel, and a second wireless communication port adapted to communicate with said wireless communication vendor.

16. The system of Claim 11 wherein said target system is a mobile electronic device.

17. The system of Claim 16 wherein said mobile electronic device is a handheld electronic device.

18. The system of Claim 17 wherein said handheld electronic device is a wireless handheld electronic device.

19. The system of Claim 11 wherein said host system is selected from the group comprising a workstation, and a personal computer.

20. The system of Claim 11 wherein the identifier of said target system includes a hardware identifier representing said target system and a vendor identifier representing a vendor associated with said target system.